

Amendments to the Claims: Please amend the claims as shown. Applicant reserves the right to pursue any cancelled claims at a later date.

1.-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) A method of designing or configuring a process control system of actuators, sensors, programmable controllers, and operating and observation stations ~~project representing automation equipment~~ for controlling a plant, the method comprising:

storing project design blocks in a central library of a memory unit assigned to an engineering system, the memory unit connected via a bus system to a programming device of the engineering system, the programming device configured to store copies of such project design blocks required for designing or configuring the ~~project~~ process control system;

saving references on the programming device, the references indicating which project design blocks are to be copied from the library to the programming device;

copying the design blocks to be copied from the library to the programming device based on the references, by the engineering system;

transferring the copied design blocks to the programming device, by the engineering system; and

storing the transferred design blocks on the programming device;

wherein the project design blocks comprise software objects representing operating and observation systems, input and output modules, the actuators, the sensors, and software blocks for creating control programs for the programmable controllers.

11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 10, wherein the programming device has at least one of the project design blocks required for designing or configuring the project process control system before the copied design blocks are transferred, the method further comprising:

comparing a software version of the at least one project design block to a software version of a corresponding project design block stored in the library; and

replacing upon a ~~user request~~ request by a user the at least one project design block with a copy of the corresponding project design block stored in the library, if the software version of the at least one project design block is older than the software version of the corresponding project design block stored in the library.

12. (previously presented) The method according to claim 11, further comprising:
erasing at least one of the references on the programming device; and
blocking the replacement of such project design block corresponding to the erased referenced.

13. (currently amended) The method according to claim 11, ~~wherein~~
~~the project is comprising a project~~ subdivided into a plurality of part projects, the part projects designed on a plurality of programming devices connected to each other, wherein
the user request is displayed on each programming device, and
the at least one project design block is replaced by the corresponding project design block stored in the library only if the user request is accepted by the users of all programming devices.

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) The engineering system according to claim-14 20, wherein ~~the~~ each programming device has at least one of the project design blocks required for designing or configuring the ~~project process control system~~ before the copied design blocks are transferred, and the software tool is further configured to:

compare a software version of the at least one project design block to a software version of a corresponding project design block stored in the library; and

replace upon a ~~user request~~ request by a user the at least one project design block with a copy of the corresponding project design block stored in the library, if the software version of the at least one project design block is older than the software version of the corresponding project design block stored in the library.

16. (previously presented) The engineering system according to claim 15, wherein the software tool is further configured to:

erase at least one of the references on the programming device; and

block the replacement of such project design block corresponding to the erased referenced.

17. (currently amended) The engineering system according to claim 15, wherein: ~~the project is subdivided into a plurality of part projects, the part projects designed on a plurality of programming devices connected to each other;~~

the user request is displayed on each programming device, and

the at least one project design block is replaced by the corresponding project design block stored in the library only if the user request is accepted by ~~the users of all~~ a respective user via input at each of the programming devices.

18. (currently amended) A programming device for designing or configuring a process control system of actuators, sensors, programmable controllers, and operating and observation stations ~~project representing automation equipment~~ for controlling a plant, the programming device comprising a software tool configured to:

save references on the programming device, the references indicating project design blocks necessary for designing the ~~project~~ process control system;

copy the necessary design blocks to the programming device from a central library of an engineering system via a bus system based on the references;

transfer the copied design blocks to the programming device; and

store the transferred design blocks on the programming device;

wherein the project design blocks comprise software objects representing operating and observation systems, input and output modules, the actuators, the sensors, and software blocks for creating control programs for the programmable controllers.

19. (new) An engineering system for designing or configuring a process control system of actuators, sensors, programmable controllers, and operating and observation stations for controlling a plant, the engineering system comprising:

a management unit comprising a memory unit that stores a central library of project design blocks in the form of software objects comprising representations of operating and observation systems, input and output modules, the actuators, the sensors, and software blocks for creating control programs for the programmable controllers;

a plurality of programming devices connected via a bus system to the memory unit, each of the programming devices storing a respective set of copies of selected ones of the project design blocks as needed for designing or configuring a respective portion of the process control system; and

a software tool that copies the selected project design blocks from the central library to each programming device, and maintains references indicating which project design blocks are copied to each programming device.

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20. (new) The engineering system of claim 19, wherein the management unit defines a plurality of parts of a project for designing or configuring the process control system, each part comprising a given subset of the project design blocks, wherein the project parts are differently assigned to at least two of the programming devices.

21. (new) The engineering system of claim 19, wherein the software tool protects certified copies of the design blocks in a given programming device from being inadvertently updated by canceling the references to the certified copies, while maintaining references to any of the project design blocks required for expansion of the process control system, wherein current project design blocks are only copied from the management unit to the given programming device that are needed for the expansion.

22. (new) The engineering system of claim 19, further comprising a software routine on the management unit that transmits a user prompt to all of the programming devices when any of the programming devices requests an updated one of the project design blocks, wherein the software routine requires acceptance of the updated design block by a user of each of the programming devices via user input in response to the user prompt, wherein after receiving said acceptance the software routine transmits said updated one of the project design blocks to all of the programming devices, wherein a given revision level for said one of the project design blocks is synchronized on all of the programming devices.